Replacement of LD-50 test on animals

*417. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any plan to replace LD-50 test on animals by acute toxic class method, up and down method and fixed dose method; and

(b) if so, the time-frame in which this test would be competely replaced by other tests?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The matter regarding replacement of LD-50 (Lethal Dose-50) test on animals required for clearance of new drugs and pesticides was examined by a group of expert constituted by the Committee for the purpose of Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals (CPCSEA) in its meeting held on 2.4.2002. The Expert Group headed by Dr. Ranjit Roy Choudhary examined the regulatory status of LD-50 test followed internationally including under OECD guidelines. The Committee has observed that in the case of drugs/ pharmaceuticals, the current acute LD-50 test as prescribed in the Scheduled Y of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules may be continued since alternative tests have not yet been approved internationally by agencies like US FDA etc.

Side-effects of tobacco

*418. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the sum and substance of the scientific research with regard to the side effects of tobacco;

(b) whether it is a fact that 50 per cent of smokers die due to smoking and smoking affects their children as well;

(c) whether it is also a fact that pan masala is one of the main causes for the throat cancer;

(d) whether it is also a fact that various organisations are demanding ban on pan masala for the last several years; and

(e) if so, by when Government would take action in the interest of people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (e) Scientific investigations have confirmed the association of smoking with various diseases and have provided additional evidence implicating cigarette smoking as a cause of coronary artery disease, stroke, obstructive lung disease, peripheral vascular disease, pregnancy complications including intra-uterine growth retardation and a variety of neoplasms including cancers of oral cavity, larynx, oesophagus, urinary bladder, kidney, stomach, pancreas, cervix and haematopoietic system. Recent studies have also established close association between Tuberculosis and tobacco use. As per the 40-year follow-up study conducted in the United Kingdom, 50 per cent of total smokers die due to smoking related diseases.

The use of tobacco in smokeless form is one of the known risk factors in causation of throat cancer. Various NGOs and public health agencies have been campaigning for a ban on pan masala.

Tobacco products other than cigarettes come under the State List. Several State Governments like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra have already banned manufacture, storage and sale of pan masala. "The Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Bill, 2001, introduced in the Rajya Sabha in March, 2001 intends to discourage the use of tobacco products in any form.

Shortage of essential medicines in Government hospitals in NER

*419. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Government hospitals functioning at present in the State of Assam and other States of NER;

(b) whether it is a fact that there is shortage of essential medicines in all Government hospitals of NER;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and